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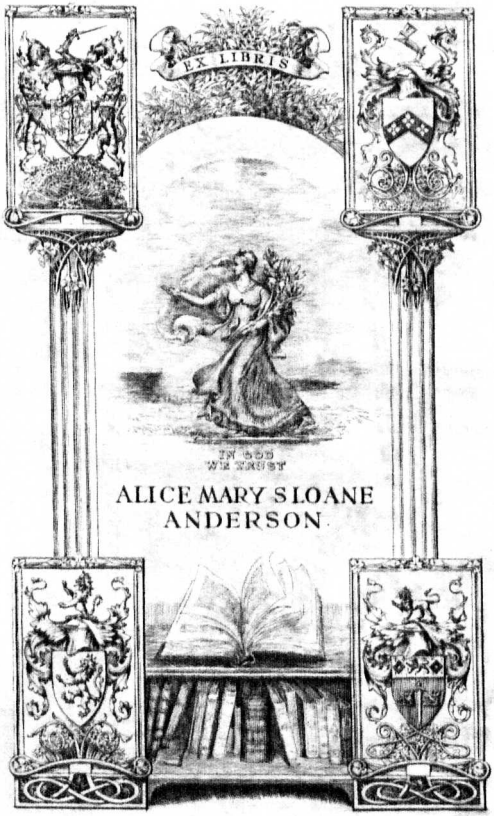
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Ghostly Moonshine

Madeleine Nightingale

BOOKS *by* MADELEINE NIGHTINGALE

ILLUSTRATED *by* C. T. NIGHTINGALE

Author of Verses Wise and Otherwise; Babe's Book of Verse; Nursery Lays; Farmyard Ditties; Tony o' Dreams; Tinker, Tailor; Ring-a-ring o' Fairies; Boggarty Ballads.

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MOSTLY MOONSHINE

By MADELEINE NIGHTINGALE

With WOODCUTS *by* C. T. NIGHTINGALE

D APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK MCMXXV

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To my Old Principal

LILIAN M. FAITHFULL

for the things of Kensington

remembered & beloved

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Round and About

THE PURSUIT OF PAN

PAN is in the beechwoods where the wind of autumn blows,
The ruddy leaves a-rustling to his footfall as he goes,
The magic of his piping has the trees within its spell,
And every bending branch is witched a singing tale to tell.
They hold me whilst I listen and he speeds to hide away,
Laughing, crying, 'Mortal lover, come and find me, come and play!
I am calling! I am calling! Mortal lover, come away!'
Was there ever lover living who had heart to say him nay?

Pan is in the valley where the bluebells wave and bend,
I heard him in the bracken-beds beyond the forest's end,
I heard the brown fern whisper round his body as he passed,
'Room for Pan, for Pan the Mighty! Room for Pan, the First and Last!'
I heard his mocking music as he went upon his way,
Singing, 'Mortal, lover mortal, I am calling! Come away!
Sure the lover is no lover who's the lover of a day;
If you love me, come and find me; he that falters doth betray.'

Pan is by the waterway where willows doze and dream,
A tip-toeing the stepping-stones across the sleepy stream;
The dragon-flies are darting and the grey trout leap to see
What god it be that makes for them so mad a melody;
For the maddest, saddest melody was ever known to man
Is the river-reeds a-piping back the pipes of laughing Pan,

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Laughing, crying, laughing, crying, 'Mortal, catch me
if you can!
Never lover loved me truly since the world of love began.'

Pan is on the moorland where the moorland breezes fling
The scent of gorse-strewn hollows over heights of purple
ling,
Where the peewits dip and circle to the witchcraft of his
mood
And every heath-bell quivers like a lovely maiden woo'd.
He has tempted and enticed me to a high and windy place,
He has piped the joy of life into a single octave's space;
'Oh, my soul is torn to tatters with the passion of your
grace
If you know of love and pity, Pan-god, stay and show
your face!'

Pan's astride a moonbeam, he is riding through the night,
And Philomel is silent till she learn his tune aright;
He has trapped beneath his fingers all the music of the
spheres,
And the stars are dancing earthward down the stairway
of the years.
He has charmed me from my comfort, he has charmed
me from my rest,
He has tranced me from my peace to walk the world at
his behest,
Piping 'Follow till you face me, though you perish in
the quest,
For the peace of Pan is holden till you see him breast to
breast.'

Pan is in the graveyard, piping to the dead
With blood upon his fingers and the thorns around his head;
The graves they gape and open as his feet go gaily by,
And the dead men hear his piping and are waking where they lie.
The dead men all are chanting to the lilt of his decree,
And their chanting is the music of the ghosts that first were free;
For dead men's eyes were lightened when the live forebore to see
The golden fruit that ripened on the Tree of Calvary.

Oh, Pan-god, god of all things, the beginning and the end,
By the canon of all justice he that marred should fitly mend;
You have wrought your restless rhythm in the longing of my soul,
You have taught mine eyes their blindness, who but you should make them whole?
I have heard too long your pipings to be still content to hear;
Pipe a healing, merry Pan-god, pipe a healing loud and clear!
You are there amongst the gravestones; pipe a healing and appear!
If to see you be to perish, what is death that I should fear?

OLD GOBLIN LANE

LONG years ago men cut it deep
Through Heathdene Copse; its banks are steep
And ripples of red sandfalls creep,
With every rain,
To flood the shelves where mosses sprout
And tiny seedling things throw out
Sparse leaves; they call it, round about,
'Old Goblin Lane.'

Cresting each slope, wood-bushes cling
And o'er its edges downward fling
Strange-featured filaments that swing
Before the breeze.
And twisted forms, grotesque and grey,
All blotched with fungus and decay
Lean down and lear upon the way
Malignities.

Which though, perchance, but tree-roots seem
To townsmen, otherwise they deem
That nightly needs must drive their team
This homeward road;
And urge their horses' sober pace
Till heaving chest and straining trace
Have trundled briskly through the place
The heaviest load.

For aged villagers will tell
Of strange occurrences and fell,
Of token seen and evil spell
On travellers cast.
Of boggarts from the wood that slide
And spring unwary backs astride,
And how he whom the boggarts ride
Turns mad at last.

And even we whose paths afar
So sane and so prosaic are,
Whose sceptic souls no terrors jar
Nor charms enchain,
Some eerie magic there have found
That from the loveliness around
Steals forth and claps our hearts in pound
In Goblin Lane.

'ADONIS'

SERENADE IN SPRING

HEAR it clang with iron weight—
Clang the dark Elysian gate,
And Adonis is set free for half a year;
For his penance dire is done,
And his steed, the mounting sun,
He has harnessed and must even now be near.

Did you hear it as you lay
In your bed, whilst far away
Came the whisper, 'He is free—ah, free at last!'
Did you hear the poplars quiver,
And the willows by the river,
In their ecstacy that winter-time is past?

Wake! Awake, the morn is breaking,
On your sill a starling's shaking
All the languor of the long night from her wing.
She has heard and she will meet him,
Tune her raucous voice to greet him—
Adonis, soul of beauty and the spring.

In the garden (Oh, come quickly!)
See the snowdrop needles thickly
Thrusting where but yesterweek was bare;
And a tiny aconite,
Like a fleck of golden light,
Lost amongst them, flaunts her trespass bold and fair.

By the path on either hand,
Where the crocus armies stand,
Though you'll count but here and there a stray
recruit,
Still the hundreds sleeping yet
In their blankets will have set
Each his lance erect and grounded at salute.

For Adonis' voice is singing!
He is laughing! He is bringing
Life and love and joy and beauty to the earth.
From the bonds of Pluto's prison,
From the wild boar's clutch he 's risen.
Hearken! 'Spring, oh spring, awake and share my
mirth!'

They have heard, the flowers and birds,
To the magic of his words
All creation stirs in welcome. Oh, my sweet,
Wake! The Spring-god's passing by;
Wake and come, that you and I
May kneel and kiss the ground beneath his feet!

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

HE walked at evening on the shining sands,
And heard them singing all around his way:
And Memory held him till he stooped at play
And dug sand-castles with time-wearied hands.

He knelt upon a rock-pool's fringéd brink
And launched Ulysses for the western stars,
And watched again the long-forgotten wars
Of floating shells that clash and grappling sink.

But when he sat and saw how surely crept
The slow sad tide, and how beneath its swell
His great sea faded and his castles fell,
He bowed his head upon his knees and wept.

ON A VIEW OVER LODSWORTH COMMON

IT seems the spirit of a happier age
Was moved to pity, viewing from afar,
And here a giant army set to wage
A giant war.

From sky to sky it ranges; companies here
And there battalions, whilst where southward swells
The down are posted, lonely and austere,
Stray sentinels.

For not that way will come the enemy
Clambering the beach as erstwhile William came;
Not from the changeless, immemorial sea
Changes proclaim.

Rather, yon small white road questing the north,
Dream-urged, for progress and magnificence
Bares an approach and as it wanders forth
Mars our defence.

And yet, how meek and still it lies to-day;
Almost one grows Time's portent to confuse,
Wondering what vandal power so gentle a way
So ill could use.

Only a labourer or a pink-gowned lass,
A shambling farm-horse and a laden wain
Round the far bend to-day, creep near and pass
Into the lane.

Would but their sounds alone climbed now the hill
To me! Alas, I hear the far-off hum
Of marching forces and—against my will—
I know they come.

But oh ye Sussex trees, stand fast! Stand fast!
Marshall your beauty, and maybe the foe,
Shamed into homage of a lovelier past,
Shall turn and go.

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THE HAUNTED GARDEN

THROUGH the wan shadow of the keep
And down its crumbled stair
My lady comes; the moonbeams light
The jewel in her hair.
Her gown is dark as a raven's wing
And her white arms are bare.

She seems amid the garden
As a shepherd with his sheep,
Who taketh all the ewes and lambs
Into his care to keep,
And calls and counts each one before
He folds his flock to sleep.

So she doth move from flower to flower,
Lest day by wind or sun,
Or rainfall fiercer than its wont
Some injury have done;
And every hurt that her love finds
She tendeth, one by one.

Yet when each flower is shepherded
And all her work is wrought,
Still wanders she the desolate paths,
And sometimes I have thought
She wept, as one that seeks
But seeking findeth nought.

DAYBREAK AT THE FARM

RED as red as any rose
On the yellow stack,
Smiling as the dull night goes,
Here 's the day come back.

Greener than a mermaid's hair,
Field of waving maize,
Greener, fair and yet more fair
To my waking gaze.

Straw-bits in the stack-yard blowing
At the dawn-wind's call,
Red-combed cock a clarion crowing
To bestir us all.

Baa of folded sheep that wait
In the misty vale,
Clank of farm-horse at the gate,
Clank of milking-pail.

Shuffling pad of cattle-feet,
Meadow gate a-swinging;
Ah, and where 's the song more sweet
Than the cow-boy's singing?

Whither way my travelling lies,
Waking I or sleeping,
Oh, it's in my ears and eyes
All these things I'm keeping.

Red as red as any rose
On the yellow stack,
Smiling as the dull night goes
Here's the day come back.

AS I WAS WALKING

AS I was walking by Churchyard wall
I met Nurse Dusk a wandering by,
'Oh, where go you in your long grey shawl,
And whom do you seek, good Dusk?' said I.

'I seek Child Day, for his Mother Night
Setteth on journey, and ere she go
Would see him lain all clean and white
In his bed at the back of the stars, I trow.'

'Oh, hither he comes, but his laggard feet
Wearily now the evening climb;
Carry him hence to his mother sweet
And put him to rest with Angelus chime.'

As I was walking by Churchyard wall,
'O rede me a rede, Mother Earth,' I said,
'And when Nurse Death I hear to call
And low in thy lap I lay my head,

Wilt waken me, as his Mother Night
Waketh at dawn the fair Child Day,
And send me afresh in the morning light
To the selfsame work and the selfsame play?'

POPLAR HALL

THE bees are crooningwhere the roses climb
Upon the latticed walls and everywhere,
Crowding their joy to tune the sweet, short time,
A myriad insects thrill the murmurous air.

Upon the late-mown lawn (vowed vagabond,
And enemy of gardeners' works and ways)
A rabbit, wandered from the woods beyond,
Tamed by the happy peace, lingers and plays.

Through yonder gate across the meadow grass
Are wind-witched rushes and a little brook
That laughs and babbles to the trailing mass
Of silvery willows leaning low to look.

What spell of gladness holds the land in thrall
I know not, but its magic in my soul
Claims me my kinship with things great and small,
That clamber, singing, to a common goal.

Yea, I forswear the wisdom of the wise,
For them their Eden cursed with Adam's curse,
But leave the fool in his fool's paradise,
Mad with the madness of the universe.

THE HILLS

THE foot track winds up to the hills,
The sunshine is warm on the hills,
The baa of the sheep from the valley is coming,
And all and around are the honey-bees humming
In the heather that 's red on the hills.

Overhead there is nothing but sky,
West and East, North and South, open sky;
With wild birds that wail across cloud-ridden spaces
And gather and sweep in their chases and races
To the uttermost ends of the sky.

On the hills there is wind and there 's rain,
The old, kindly, grey-bearded rain,
That freshens the face with its soft friendly fingers;
And long in the nostrils the scent of it lingers,
The heather-sweet scent of the rain.

But the wheel of the world there is still,
It rolls up the steep and is still;
Its mart and its barter, its curse and caresses,
Its achings and breakings, its strainings and stresses,
Grow quiet and more quiet and are still.

The people who stray from the hills
Remember the strength of the hills,
And its image it is that the hearts of them borrow
To hide, though they bear all their life long, a sorrow—
The sorrowful need of the hills.

And at last when their tired feet fail,
At long last, when they falter and fail,
The heather will spread them a couch for their dying,
And above them the winds and the wild birds be crying
Their wake, when their tired feet fail.

THE LARCHES OF SNAPELANDS COPSE

THE larches from the forest ways
Are gathered in a ring,
Beflouncéd fair in finest lace
To taunt the laggard spring
With these unready woods that stay
So long their blossoming.

See! Save for them the valley lies
Warm-clad in brown and grey
And purple; nor one other tree
Dares fling his cloak away
And brave in budding loveliness
The April's windy play.

So now as even's whisper stirs
Their crests, and slanting beams
Of sunset sheen their outlines bright
Like gossamer, it seems
They're fairies dancing there to wake
The forest from its dreams.

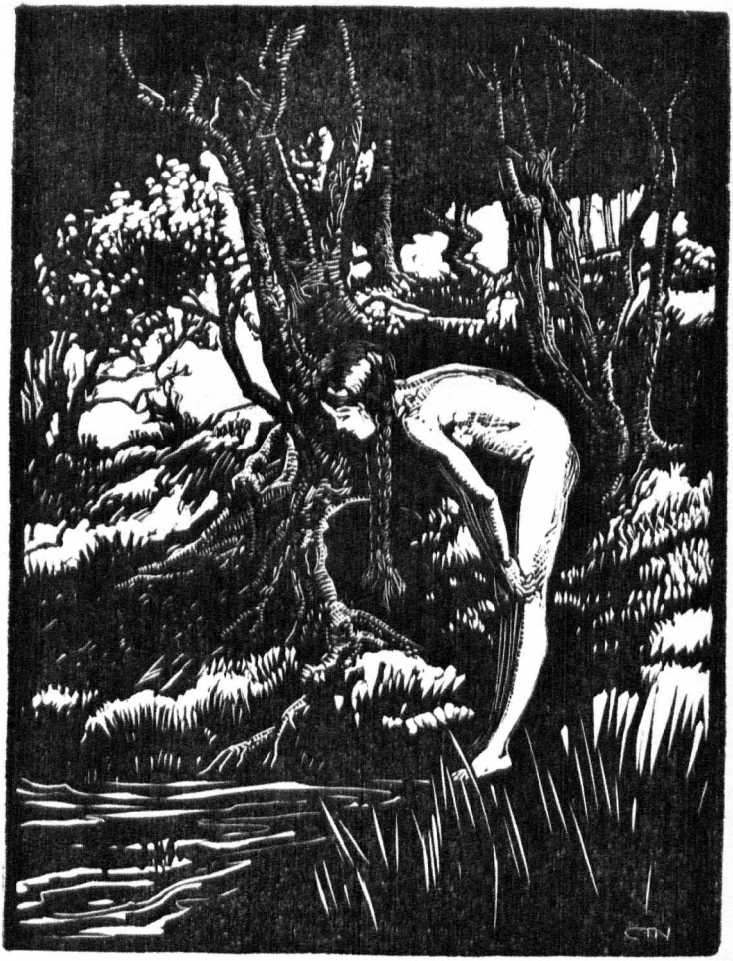
And gentler than the wafted air
Where yonder cuckoo flies,
And sweeter than the sheep-bells, far
Across the down, uprise
The song their elfin dance of sun
And wind doth improvise.

'Rouse ye, oaks and ashes, rouse!
Chestnut saplings, see,
Though spring be a loiterer
Pity 'twere should we,
Fairy trees with fairy feet,
Loiter slow as he!

'Hey then! Cast your dowdy coats,
Time 'tis to unpack
Creased and crumpled summer gowns;
Summer 's coming back.
Shame, when she peep o'er the hill
If summer garb ye lack!

'Shiver, though ye shall, maybe,
Dancing in the breeze,
Penance direr sure 'twere worth
Summer so to please?
Summer loves a pretty frock;
Haste, unpack, ye trees!'

Thus the larches dance and sing.
Traveller, as you climb
Slow the ridge above them, mark
And tune the self-same rhyme.
Fuller life is his that meets
Half-way summer-time!



'ROMANCE'

ROMANCE

ENCHANTMENT reigns and all these haunted woods
Are steeped in magic like a fairy ring,
That treading so their secret solitudes
My very self is made a changeling thing.

Nay, two there are in strange comparison
Wandering the woodroffe-scented ways: one pale
Of face and shabby, travel-worn, and one
As lovely as some prince of fairy tale.

And ever one doth of a finding speak,
'Forlorn of life! Forlorn of love!' he cries
'A fairy child, a fairy child we seek
With the world's wisdom in her sage-sad eyes.'

For him a shadow flits when shadows fall
Now here, now there, from lichened tree to tree,
Still as themselves, yet stretching arms that call
Aloud, as muted pain pleads silently.

And sometimes when most quiet the brown paths lie
Nor any breeze is in the boughs above,
Hears he the stir of footsteps passing by,
So feather-light that scarce a leaf doth move.

Or, on the green-framed radiancy of dawn
He sees, in urgent joy the day to greet,
Etched the sweet semblance of a dancing faun,
Petulant with briar-entangled feet.

And in the woodland's dip where one small pool
Gathers the rain to lure the peeping sun—
That dallying here his crimson face to cool
The lovely hour prolong ere day be done—

Oft hath beheld a little form snow-white
Creep down at eve and thus companionéd,
Turn from a bath reflecting eyes so bright,
With all her maidenness a rosy red.

And once he fancied 'mid the sleeping trees
She came and looked with lovely gaze that shone,
Not wisdom-sad but glad with wisdom's peace,
And laughed and knelt and touched him and was gone.

Ah, fairy child, but darker hours there are
When, princely words and you both—both forgot,
I wander lonely, restless, and how far,
Questing I know not why, I know not what.

A SONG OF SURREY

THERE'S a highway from the highlands and the lowlands and the sea,
And it runs by town and village, heath and valley, lake and lea,
And sometimes to the north it bends, or south or east or west,
A-winding and a-wandering, crest to dip and dip to crest;
But for me it has no ending, let it wander where it will
Till it reach the slim-stemmed pine-trees on the sides of Beacon Hill.

Do ye stand a gallant army, brown-clad soldiers, side by side,
Sturdy, steady, straight and silent, with a child like me to stride
Backwards, forwards, sword-beladen, scanning you with solemn eyes,
Halting here to call 'Attention!' there to praise or criticize?
Is it Wellington who walks there holding you in brave review?
Is the muffled earth you trample still the field of Waterloo?

Have you found another lover than the lad that once was I,
Who will stand afar adoring those dark heads against the sky,
Half pretending, half believing that his footfall would debase

By invasion of your precincts the perfection of your grace,
Yet will creep at last as I crept to his homage full and sweet,
Lowly kneel and, vowed your vassal, kiss the ground beneath your feet?

Do the squirrels skim your branches, do you sing beneath the sun
Little creaking notes of music, stolen lightly one by one
From the whin-chat in the willows of the lowland waterway
Or the grasshoppers at even where the golden corn-ears sway?
Ah, the squirrels have forgotten him they once forgot to fear,
But he who heard your sun-song then can ne'er forget to hear.

Does the belt of larches southward, like a feathery fringe of green
Edge the canopy of heaven? Does it waft, that in between
He who stands amid the shadows that your scented breezes cool
May watch the gleam and glitter of far Frensham's silver pool?
Do ye think I cannot stand there, though a thousand miles dispart,
With the fragrance and the larches and the silver in my heart?

Oh, to see those slopes of bracken, patchwork quilts of
green and brown,
Tuck the tired land to slumber when the tired sun goes
down!
Oh, to lie a tired boy again, with all their beauty spread
Like a picture 'twixt the casing of the window by my bed
Growing dimmer—aye, and dimmer—till the Surrey
night-winds sweep
The sighing of the pine-trees down the valley of my
sleep!

Yea! there 's Surrey soil below you and there 's Surrey
sky above,
And the Surrey serf who knelt there bound his body and
his love.
Have your myriad green-grey needles wrought a wind-
ing-sheet for me
When I come, as come I shall, to pay my final fealty?
For wheresoe'er I wander, first and last, I shall not die
Till I lay me where the Hindhead pines may sing my
lullaby.

COCK-CROW

THE moon has slid from his place on high
Over the far, dark hill.
The stars are pale in the changing sky,
The soft warm air grows chill.

Slow to the fold of the dying night
The shades and shadows creep,
The east is loosing her flocks of light
And the world turns in its sleep.

BY THE RIVER

COME away, come away, for the shadowy waters
Tease our hearts with their quiet flow,
Earth has grown old and her sons and daughters
  Weary to hasten an age too slow.
We have only our souls in a world of seeming,
And souls if they dream and believe in dreaming
Will dream of a City with far lamps gleaming,
  Till the river that severs have caught their glow.

Over the ripples, like floating flowers
  Flung some fairy path to trim,
With a shimmering beauty their image dowers
  Death, though the lamps themselves show dim.
Oh, somebody there from the City peeping,
Watch the dark bank and the dark forms creeping,
And call in your pity to Charon sleeping,
  Hid in the reeds by the river's brim!

LODSWORTH CHURCH

SMALL grey director of men's souls, when high
Thy makers set thee there at level gaze
With yonder crested slopes that touch the sky,
They made thee schoolmaster for all thy days.

No daunting steeple hast thou then to inspire,
But, lest frail hearts should falter, crown'st instead
Thy lichened roof with little peak no higher
Than the peaked cap that crowns a dunce's head.

And we, who from the farmstead coming, need
To cross the valley, climb and lift our eyes
Slow step by step till at thy side we read
Rightly thy vision and with thee grow wise.

Hear me, O Master! Have I studied well
Or ill the task thou standest there to teach?
'My child, behold, and in thy life forth tell
Earth's highest hills hold heaven in their reach.'

THE MOON IS ON THE MOUNTAIN POOL

THE moon is on the mountain pool,
And round in meek array
The clustering stars, her convoy, lie—
A golden fleet and gay,
That silent on a silent sea,
Sails silently away.

Oh, you, who with the moon and stars
Are one, recall the night
That brought you to this water's side
And charm anew my sight
To read upon its lucid deeps
The image of your light.

Where winds the path from windy heights
Your coming was; and still
Your footstep as the shadows are
That climb along the hill
Until the moon, full risen, all
The slope with radiance fill.

So still—I scarcely heard; you stood
Beside me ere I knew.
But when at last my spirit woke
And leapt to welcome you,
It seemed that all my being stirred
And thrilled a welcome too.

And now, where are you? Oh, sweet soul
  Of Beauty come! Lean low
Again and bid me see as then
  Your mirrored face aglow
Until for ever here for me
  Its fadeless glory show.

Alas, the moon is on the pool;
  Around in meek array,
Her convoy, lie the quiet stars—
  A golden fleet and gay,
That, silent on a silent sea,
  Sails silently away.

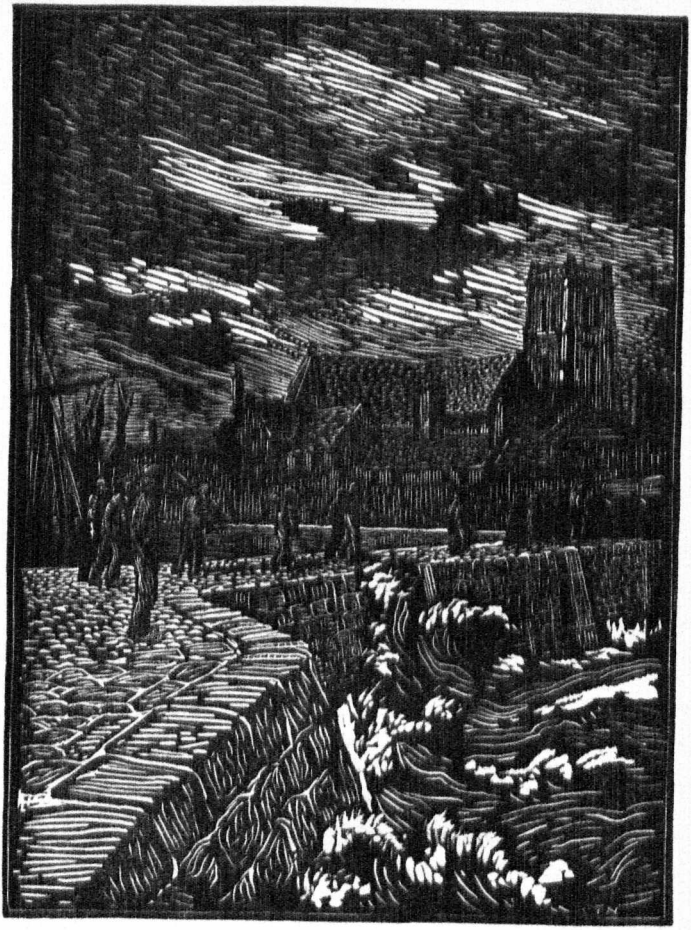
FAIR MAIDS OF FEBRUARY

TRULY, strange maidens these that hide
By such untended ways,
Where only tangled brambles grow,
And sodden grass lies grey below
The trees, and field-mice come and go,
And cats and blue-backed jays.

Or may their meek retirement here
Not wholly guileless be,
And Mother Earth, being old and wise
And womanly, this plan devise
To take one lover by surprise
And so to capture me?

For wandering from my border-beds
Wherein scarcely uplift
The bold young spears of daffodil
Or half-sheathed crocus-spikes, what thrill
Of new-waked longing ye fulfil—
Persephone's first gift!

Oh, symbols of six lovely months,
You have me at your feet.
However lovely she appear,
I swear no flower through all the year
Shall win a homage half so dear
As you, most fair, most sweet.



'ALL SOULS' EVE'

ALL SOULS' EVE

on the Coast of Belgium

HUSHO, my baby, the tawny clouds fly,
From their lair in the sea-line they hunt through the sky,
The green waves are waking and lifting their heads,
And fierce will they roar as they climb from their beds;
But husho, my baby, howe'er the storm blow
The fish-boats are safe in the harbour below.

Soon where the beach-ways now rustle and sing,
The bones of the dead that the storm billows bring
Will murmur and moan as they lie on the shore;
And the soft crooning sand-songs will hush you no more
Till the main be crept back to the peace of its sleep,
And the bones of the dead to their graves in the deep.

The loud wind is wailing—oh, husho, my child,
'Tis the voice of their spirits that crieth so wild,
The fishers have folded their nets; snug and fast
The brown sail is furled round the tall, swaying mast,
And hear the men tramping athwart the dark quay,
They are coming to pray for the souls of the sea.

BOGGARTY FARM

THERE 'S a ghost that waits by Lane End Field
Where the five-barred gate's a-swing;
Grey as the mist of the Sussex Weald
It stands among the ling.

Boggarty Farm! Boggarty Farm!
But she shall never know
The hearthstone 's cold that once was warm
Four-score years ago.

Your barns, four-square towards the heath
Still vaunt their sturdy wall;
She cannot see the yard beneath
Where the weeds run shoulder-tall.

And never the wind nor wet can harm
Your crumbling rot inside,
So fling, to cheat her, desolate farm,
One broken casement wide.

Long gone your pigeons but your roof
Strange wood-birds wander o'er;
And a wind-blown latchet mocks the hoof
That once she listened for.

Is it this she hears as down the hill
She watches the brambled way?
But who shall we send, old farm, to fill
Its emptiness to-day?

And who was it stood by Lane End Field
With the wind amongst her hair?
Nobody knows but the mist of the weald
That creeps to keep her there.

Boggarty Farm! Boggarty Farm
But she shall never know
The hearthstone's cold that once was warm
Four-score years ago.

THE POPLARS

FROM the tall poplars sentinel
Above the garden's quiet ways
How many a leaf that late did dwell
Secure in coign of summer days
Has fallen now.
And see you how,
Lying, they seem to limn in gold
An epitaph on the brown mould.

'*Here lies a lovely season, dead.*'
And I that read the sadlier go,
And sad the grey skies overhead
That lean and look and learn and know.
For ah, alas
For hours that pass!
Shall any 'mid the times to be
Atone their dear lost company?

THE HOUSEHOLDER

OH little house! oh, garden-plot!
So many a year your lover I,
Prithee, keep troth in this fair spot,
That I, a-dying, may not die.

Here are sweet places I have found
For happiness, and when I go
I shall not rest in stranger ground
But walk the lovely ways I know.

Where the dark pine-trees limn the lawn
Beneath the moonlight's artistry,
Still, hand in hand with elf and faun,
I'll dance in those dim years to be.

Still from the garden's end at hush
Of golden sunset—never fear—
As now I'll count each flaming bush
When June and gillyflowers are here.

Or, where forget-me-nots are blue
By untrimmed paths I'll stray though all
My spirit robes be drenched with dew
From the cow-parsley shoulder-tall.

And in the hornbeam hedge when some
Immortal red-breast sings, still—still
My hands shall find some heavenly crumb
The accustomed tribute to fulfil.

In that far City of the Lord
Think you I'll be beyond recall
When, littered on the springing sward,
The wind-blown apple-blossoms fall?

And when the twisted orchard-trees
—Old, old as I—as I are dead,
See the young striplings! High on these
The fruit will swing above my head.

Oh, I must hear my screaming jays,
My starlings bluster, and my eaves,
At dawn-breeze of eternal days,
Brush still the loud magnolia leaves;

And when on winter eves I see
An alien shadow on the blind,
Still steal within and silently
Some empty fire-lit corner find.

. . . . . .

Thou tenant of a far-off age,
Shall I of thee be all unseen?
Or, entering this thine heritage
Wilt enter too on what has been?

Unknown, I greet thee! Ah, believe
Love, though the lover's span be spent,
Love doth not question, doth not grieve,
Being beyond all banishment.

Oh, little house! Oh, garden plot!
Oh the dear years your lover I!
Since you must live when I am not,
I shall not die! I shall not die!

BUTTERCUP MEADOW

HERE was it once I played, where all day long,
Skylarks and small brown honey bees made song,
For those that paddled in a golden sea
—The cows and me.

But ah, not ever then a grey fence bound
You shining sweep within so small a round;
Nay, for its farmost surges lapped the strand
Of fairy-land.

Oh, cattle, do ye mind those magic hours?
And how to you, all drowsy 'mid the flowers,
I told my prowess, vaunting one by one,
My great deeds done?

How then with little yellow-dusted feet,
I strutted there before Time's judgement-seat,
Brave in the matchless glory yet to be
—My destiny?

I, too, remember! Oh, to-day, with you,
To tread those child-enchanted ways anew!
The splendour of that dream to dream again,
And not in vain.

YE ORCHARD BOUGH

RED brick the path—one broken edge
Is shadowed by a hornbeam hedge
Wherein small feathered lovers pledge
Sweet troth in spring;
And down the other gooseberries grow
And tulips, flaunting in a row
Their colours at the trees white show
Of blossoming.

But if beyond their gaudy bed
Your footstep turn 'twill straightway tread
Green velvet grass; where overhead
Are apple-boughs
And pears and plums, whose little leaves
Laugh to the selfsame breeze that grieves
Nightly amid the creepered eaves
Above the house.

And, oh, what doctrine of content
Hides in their soft-voiced merriment!
What steadfast quietude the bent
Old trees declare!
And, see how yonder quince doth wrest
His root from out its earthy nest
To make a seat that some chance guest
May stretch him there.

Here too the chequered thrushes run
And dart and peck, flirting each one
A saucy tail, if prize (or none)
Reward his race.
And when God's larder 's yielded food
Sufficient, here, in grateful mood,
Each trills abroad for meal so good
Melodious grace.

And where the ramblers clamber, soon
From morn till latest afternoon,
The brown-backed honey-bees will croon
Their labour-song;
And buzz their busy hiveward way,
How heavy-laden but how gay,
Returning, like a child to play
The flowers among.

Oh, 'tis a goodly hostelry—
This place whose roof-tree is the sky,
Whose sign swings just a fruit-tree high—
'Ye Orchard Bough!'
Truly, of them that stay awhile,
The sorest soul it doth beguile
And sends him with a readier smile
His ways, I vow.

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

THE moon has set sail from her harbour of clouds,
And the deeps of the star-spangled sea
Uphold now as surely the curve of her keel
As the magical hour holds me.

So still is the world, like a city engulfed,
That almost from where she steers
I can fancy the rhythmical plash of her oars
And the kiss of her prow in my ears.

But the moon was a beautiful lady once
Long ago, and we wandered away—
She and I—to a country that lay far beyond
The troubles that trouble the day.

It wasn't a faith, nor a hope, nor a dream—
That Kingdom of Comforting Night—
But a silence where beauty was heard like a song,
And a shadow more lovely than light.

Lady Moon, as a lass to her lover, you crept
Down the stairs of my loneliness then,
And you stood at their foot, far more fair, far more true
Than have proven the daughters of men.

For the daughters of men, they may come, they may go,
And the stairway is left, as am I;
If I climb where you crept, may I sail the child's boat
Of my soul at your side in the sky?

The Secret Commonwealth

MOONSHINE

UNDER the pines in the garden dim
When the long white moonbeams trailing slow
Down through the dusky branches limn
With a pattern of lace the ground below,
The pine-trees' sleek brown carpet lies
Silver and black beneath the skies.

Meshes of black on a silver ground,
Smooth and dainty for dancing feet—
Was ever a midsummer ball-room found
So sweetly magic, so magic sweet,
As here where the pine-trees have cast their spell,
And the elves and the fauns and the fairies dwell?

Above the gloom of the garden beds,
Above the crest of the crannied wall,
The golden stars of the sunflower heads
Are lit; and beneath, most fair of all,
Like lovely ghosts the lilies stand—
The lamps of Our Lady in fairyland.

In the silent air on silent wings,
Now high, now low, the black bats fly;
And ghost moths flit and phantom things
Creep from the shadowy tapestrie
That the pines and the fairies hang, fold by fold,
On the walls and trees of the garden old.

Hist! into the ballroom, two by two,
  Trip sprite and brownie, elf and faun;
Summon the moths and the black bats too,
  Summon the phantoms across the lawn,
And the child at the window—call, oh call,—
Summon him, too, to the fairies ball!

Under the pines in the garden dim,
  Shadow and shimmer and gossamer sheen,
Columbines filmy and harlequins slim,
  Pixies in russet and goblins in green,
Skipping and tripping in fairy time,
A revel of elfin pantomime.

The fairies are dancing beneath the moon,
  The phantoms can see and the moths—speak low!—
We sat where the grass all brown is strewn;
  Hush, we have seen them. Hush; *we* know.
For the moonshine limning its silver snare
Netted us all as we waited there.

TWELVE O'CLOCK KNOB

UP amongst the heather,
When the moon is high,
Lamplight in the valley,
Starlight in the sky,
Swinging on the bracken
That 's bowing to the breeze.
In and out the twinkling stems
Go the Pharisees.

Ding Dong! Ding Dong! all across the Down,
Twelve o'clock is striking in Littlehampton Town.
Robin 's gone a marketing with all his merry mob;
'Wares to sell! Wares to sell, on Twelve o'clock Knob!'

Ho ho! Hey ho!
Singing all together;
Fool a mortal were to miss
Fairy time and weather.
'Come, you lazy stay-at-homes,
While the moon is bright!
Luck is for the buying
On Midsummer Night!'

Ding Dong! Ding Dong! All across the Down,
Twelve o'clock is striking in Littlehampton Town.
Heather buds a bursting, Ling bells all a bob.
Robin—Robin 's calling on Twelve o'clock Knob.

Fern Seed! Fern Seed!
Shed in Verdley Wood:
An acorn cup to gather it,
And see the measure's good!
Treasured in a kerchief
Lover's lips have kiss'd;
Purse-strings tight as tether-ropes
And not a penny miss'd.

Ding Dong! Ding Dong! all across the Down,
Twelve o'clock is striking in Littlehampton Town.
There 's cowtails still to tangle and hen roosts still to rob,
But Puck is out of mischief on Twelve o'clock Knob!

Chimney shadows streaking
Down the sandy street;
Creeping, creeping over them
Stealthy mortal feet;
An acorn full of fairy lore
To trade with fairy men,
But oh, the wealth you're taking
Before you're home again.

Ding Dong! Ding Dong! all across the Down,
Twelve o'clock is striking in Littlehampton Town.
And the candles all are guttering at the nightcaps on the hob,
When Robin traffics magic on Twelve o'clock Knob.

THE LAND OF APPLE TREES

ALONG the road the day had gone
I met the Queen of Avalon.
I begged her 'Take me, if you please
To your green Isle of Apple Trees.'

And, ah, she bade me hasten back
The way I came. Alack, alack,
Not mine to enter at my ease
Into the Land of Apple Trees.

But when the day was vanished quite
And all his path was dark and night
Was black as ink around my bed,
She sent a plan into my head.

Said she, 'When your six poplars shake
Their tops, it is a sea they make.
Why . . . if you listen more and more
You'll hear the waves beat on the shore.

And every ship that sails thereon
Has set her course for Avalon.
Beneath the moon when winds are fair
It may be they might bring you there.'

. . . . . .

And yet, there are no ships to see
Except the stars—it seems to me
I must embark on one of these
To find the Land of Apple Trees.

ELF-SHOT

LONELY, lonely,
Dreaming by the fire,
Drooping lips a tremble
With a far desire;

Tears and smiles at combat
For thy hidden heart,
What then dost thou ponder
In thy world apart?

Was't but fairy fancy
Elfin arrow brought,
Or a deeper wisdom
That its anguish taught?

Goblin-flames a flicker
In the glowing coals
See'st thou, or the Light that lights
Men to save their souls?

ENCHANTMENT

I BUILT a house of moonbeams, very white and still,
I built it in the Silver Wood that lies below the hill.
The shadows came to look at it; they gathered all around,
They slid down from the branches and they crept along the ground.

I climbed the sky for lanterns, and the seven Pleaides,
I caught and brought them in my hand; I hung them on the trees.
I set a guard of glow-worms, two by two and circle wise,
They stared away the shadows with their little gleaming eyes.

I laid a lovely carpet of grass and celandine,
Of primroses and violets and mosses grey and green,
And down-a-down the hollow from the dab-chicks' weedy pond
I fetched me reeds to make a couch of rush and bracken frond.

I made a roof of oak-leaves with all the purple blue
Of summer night and silence peeping, peeping through;
And the air was sweet as honey with the scent that no man knows
Save he who's learned the fragrance of worship's whitest rose.

La . . dy! La . . dy! Mistress Mab o' mine,
I'm waiting in my palace here of moonbeam shine;
Oh muffle not with thistle-down your wheels of
crickets' bones,
That I may hear them rattling on the woodway's ruts
and stones.

The palace door is open and all the live-long night
Its loveliness is lit for you by star and glow-worm light;
So when your coach is passing, speak and bid your
charioteer
Before it check his gauze-winged team with their reins
of gossamere.

And you shall in and rest awhile, until the first thin
note
Of Philomel uprising, enchant us forth to float
On sound-waves of pure magic over earth and sky and
sea
Adventuring through a mist of dream the realms of
ecstacy.

THE CHOICE

AS I was fishing by Huntlie Bank,
True Thomas he passed by.
'Thomas the Rhymer!' I called his name;
He turned and he looked and back he came,
'And how may I serve you, my pretty child,
Sitting so meek and sitting so mild,
A fishing the pool where the sedge is rank
Round and about of Huntlie Bank?'
And, oh, but the strangest face had he,
His coat was as green as the greenest sea,
And it seemed as he stood and stared at me,
There was magic in his eye.

He held me an apple in his right hand,
The half of a fairy man was he;
But up stood I and I curtsied low,
Staid as a duchess and twice as slow,
And all my petticoats flounced as neat
As a daisy's petals about my feet,
'Nay, prithee,' said I, 'Good sir, if you
Be going to Elfland, why, take me too.'
He clippered a clap of his velvet shoon
And a little, white road fell out of the moon,
Quoth he, 'If we're starting we'd best start soon,
Or we'll never be home for tea.'

THE PRINCESS OF KENSINGTON

THE Princess of Kensington
Goes down the cobbled street;
Oh, listen to the patter
Of her small brocaded feet.
Her peacock, her page boy
And maids-of-honour two,
From dawn to dusk they follow her
London through.

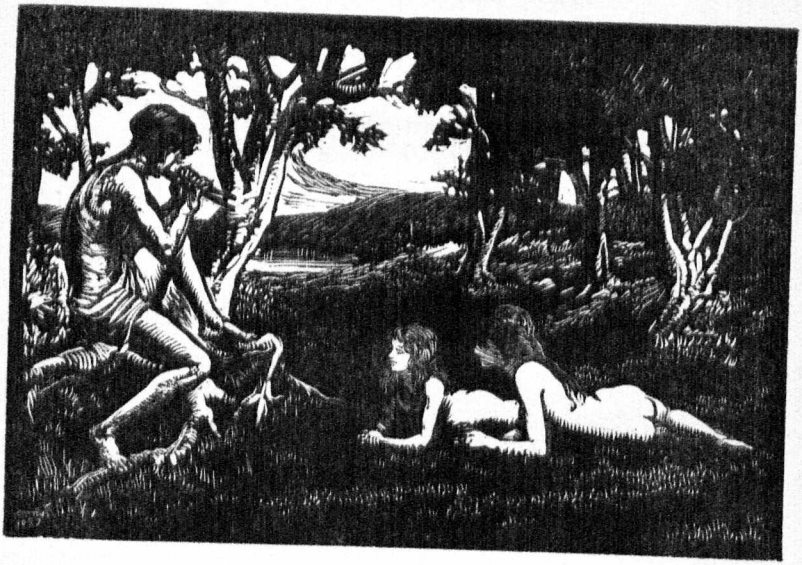
The fairies of Kensington
Are driven out and gone,
From Hyde Park to Holland Park
There 's left but only one,
And she—she 's lost her lover
And searches up and down
The highways and byeways
Of London Town.

The night-watch of Kensington
A-calling on his round,
'Two o' the clock and starlight!'
—It *is* a pleasant sound;
But, ah, the little Princess
How softly whispers she,
'Albion! Albion!
Where can—where can he be!'

The children of Kensington
Lazily they lie
Fast and warm within their beds
And hear her passing by,
But not a child will draw his blind
And shout 'Oh, don't you know,
He is hiding in the Green Park
Where the snow-drops grow.'

THE LOST SHEPHERD

'AND yet eternity remains,' he said
And ancient tales and songs of those long dead.
Not mine, not mine these unfamiliar lands
Where men weave sorrow with unquiet hands;
Where gentleness has learned ungentle ways,
And deeds are hid and only gain has praise;
Where youth forsakes his dreams and visions cease,
And old men fear, nor even Death is peace.
I will away and learn 'neath earlier skies
How knowledge falters; and myself grown wise,
Will seek the wind-swept hills where truth is born
And list the winding of his silver horn.
For wizard twilight is about the way
Of those who mind his lonely call, and they
Shall hear dim silence full of tender words,
And they shall tutor of the singing birds
And know the music of the murmuring trees.
A fairy mood shall wrap them in its ease
Till time and trouble fade and in their place
Be Beauty. Yea, and as through all the space
Of heaven's pasturage the dawn doth fold
The wandering stars, e'en so shall Beauty—old,
More old than any tears—fulfil her part
And fold me in the quiet of her own heart.'



'ARCADIA'

Bagatelle

THE RHYME OF THE OLD COTTAGE

I KNOW a small grey cottage
Where the apple-blossoms blow,
And the old-world spirits linger
There and wander to and fro.
You may hear a silk skirt rustle
Or a silver snuff-box snap,
And little fans that flutter,
And little heels that tap.
Oh, a-tapping and a-tapping
As they go from room to room,
In the cottage on the hillside
Where the apple-blossoms bloom!

You may see the shadows flicker
In the old gold chimney-glass,
You may scent the faded perfume
Of their presence as they pass;
They will lean above your chair-back,
They will whisper in your ear,
Singing love-songs like a lover
When no one else is near.
Oh the madness and the gladness,
Light they come and light they go,
In the cottage on the hill-side
Where the apple-blossoms blow!

'BELGIE'

NIGHTLY from out the dark he came,
And by the rambler-rose's stem
That climbing clothes the window's frame
Would pause and call aloud to them,
His masters of a former day,
The Belgians who have gone away.

Into the hall's familiar gloom,
Stealthy and still, he'd creep anon
And peer within the sitting room
For homely figures long since gone,
Lest chance return them there and he,
Unknowing miss their company.

With tattered ears and fur unkempt
He'd crouch, scorning incredulous
The bowl of milk we set to tempt
Him back to make his home with us.
What truck had he with folks who sent
His friends and him to banishment?

Yet thus a moment would he wait
In sight of the accustomed fire,
And gleam with eyes of fear and hate
At us who cheated his desire;
Then mewing once his plaintive mew,
Dart to his loneliness anew.

TO A BOW FIGURE ON MY MANTLE SHELF

OH, little maid, that ever doth upraise
A china finger, bidding me be still,
Unfold the secret of your tranquil ways
Whilst I sit quiet here beneath your will.

What have you, hidden in your apron there,
That thus so jealously your small white fist
For ever holds it? Some sweet fruit and rare
Of silence that my noisy years have missed?

What have you gathered? Show me for I too
Would gather, that the peace which smooths
your face,
Transform this idleness for me, as you,
Into a lovely labour and a grace.

THE VAGABOND

WHEN first I went a-journeying
To find the great god Pan,
For love of him my heart was set,
I asked the way of all I met,
Or smooth or rough or fine or wet
I trudged, nor once the glory let
Bedim for time or tide or man;
The vagabond of faith was I
To find the great god Pan.

When I went forth a-journeying
To find the great god Pan,
There was no bridge whose stream below
But washed the rushes with its flow,
That wind-blown reeds might lovelier grow
And ten times lovelier music owe
Bewitched beneath his finger's span,
Till rhythmic river, road, and sky
Pulsed to the great god Pan.

When first I went a-journeying
To find the great god Pan,
His goat feet trailed the morning dew,
He piped in every wind that blew;
In cornfields as I wandered through
He hid and peeped and called I knew;
The wood-ways rustled as he ran,
And all about them brambles spread
To snare the great god Pan.

When I went forth a-journeying
To find the great god Pan,
A little, little child was I,
But, ah, the years go wandering by.
Oh, Piper, be thou far or nigh,
Pipe! pipe! that when I come to die,
All tuneful to thy playing 's plan,
Still child I be and journeying
To find the great god Pan.

THE PASSING OF SUMMER

WHY are you crying, white rose, white rose,
Lonely the long day through?
Has the lady that loved you (who knows? who knows?)
Has she forsaken you?

All your white brothers are drooping their heads,
And down the long line of the wall
Slowly the crimson carpet spreads
As the rambler's petals fall.

But that is the pathway her beauty chose,
Royally forth to die;
Softly she came to us, softly she goes:
Cannot we smile, you and I?

Treading the rose-leaves there, how sweet the breath
Of her beautiful passing is borne!
Lovely her life, but so lovely a death
Surely of sorrow is shorn?

Then why are you crying, white rose, white rose?
Naught of this comforts you?
Lovely she came to us, lovely she goes—
Hush! I am crying too.

WITH A BOWL OF BULBS

I SET thee bulbs in a china bowl,
And heigh for the green spikes showing!
But who sets love within a soul
Shall never mark its growing.
For ho, and a heigh, and alack-a-day,
That love so deep doth hide away!

Oh, bowls as brooks are shallow aye,
And spring bulbs fast are sprouting,
But love's flower never till I die
From my soul will be outing.
And yet . . . ah me! Would'st thou might see
The blossom there that blooms for thee!

A SONG OF YOUTH

WHEN the brown earth's reveille is loud in my ears
And the sweet, golden laugh of the sun,
Oh, what is to me the swift count of the years,
Rushing by, one by one?

There are daffodils down in a hollow I know,
And white violets still have their home
By the hedge where the blackthorn's fall mimics their snow—
And the catkins are come.

O venomous Time, can you cheat me of these
As you hurry along? Nay, the spring
That you fling me in passing to love at my ease
Has drawn me your sting.

So avaunt! Go your way! She has lent me her song
To pelt your broad back and, behold,
The heart that is singing is lusty and strong
And can never grow old.

GATHER THE LEAVES...

GATHER the leaves, then. How they lie
Like broken toys on the sodden grass,
And the winds that played with them once go by
And with never a glance they pass.

Gather the leaves. They will not mend,
So let 's to a certain heap we know
Under the trees at the garden's end,
In the shade where no flowers grow.

How many another joy has gone
The selfsame way! As the heap grew higher
How once we grieved, but the grieving 's done;
Do we blame the winds that tire?

For the winds are sweet and the winds are true
Whilst they last, whilst they last, we'll say;
And though you should tire as the year runs through
We'll remember our summer's day.

PETER PANTHEIST

MY Peter, as you pick your way
Across the pebbled path, among
The tall montbretia flames to play,
The roses that but late have flung
Their petals to entice your feet
Themselves than you are not more sweet.

With what sleek miracle of grace
You leap to catch the sturdy stem,
Bend the bright blossoms from their place
Earthward that you may look at them.
What see you, that so wistfully
You hold them ere you set them free?

But when as wistful I caress
Yourself, small kitten, well I know
Why very love of loveliness
Lingers so loth to let you go.
What see you else than I see too—
The Maker of the flowers and you?

FELLOWSHIP

WHY are the daffodils dancing, dancing
Down by the river's rim;
Why do they curtsey and bend and bow,
Graciously sleek and slim?

Why do the primroses lift their heads,
And the violets under the hedge?
Why does the warbler twitter and stare
From his waving perch in the sedge?

Why do the ripples run to land,
Why do the fishes rise?
Why does the owl in the beech-tree's stem
Open his sleepy eyes?

And why in the reeds does the Pan-god wake
And play on his pipe again
Till all the heart of the spring-time throbs
To the magic of his strain?

Because the lad that I love and I
Walk by the river-way,
And there 's nought in the world but stirs itself
To give our love Good-day.

To E.H. *with a* CORNELIAN BROOCH

SO sure a smith hath set this golden stone
Fitly within its rim of filagree,
His craft my messenger I make to own
How sure the love that in my heart set thee.

NANCY

NANCY that lived by the pine-woods—
Hear the pines sigh oh sigh—
Nancy is dead and the pine-woods
Cannot be sadder than I.

Oh, sweet is the scent of the heather
And the wind that blows up from the sea,
But the heath and the sea-breeze together
Were never so sweet as was she.

And how shall I watch now the speeding
White sea-gulls above the green wave,
When she lies all blind and unheeding,
Asleep in her grave?

Or at eve when the milch-cows are homing
And the far bells grow near, shall I bear
To know but the kine now are coming
And she is not there?

Her voice was more tender than ever
The soft stream that sings by her door,
And the pine-woods and I—shall we never
Hear the sound of it more?

And lighter than sun-rays that, slipping
Betwixt the dark bows, flecked her gown
Was the fall of her little feet tripping
The pine-needles' brown.

E. S.

THERE is decorum in his staid black coat
And in his mien—not hurried, grave yet gay;
A cough, half import, half to clear his throat
Proclaims before him his professional way,
And up the path 'twould seem he prayed for grace
(So bent his head) to treat this special case.

Called in too lightly, how with careful phrase,
And mobile features, tutored to express
Judicial understanding, he will raise
Your pride and make a minor ailment less,
Till from the hall-door step you wave good-bye,
Knowing you summoned him yet wondering why.

But, ah, how different is the man that comes
To battle shadows in a darkened room;
Quiet and wise to feel when suffering numbs
Or heart or will; the very touch of whom,
Being all sympathy, dares probe as far
As those lost deeps where faith and courage are.

How different, when, ostensibly to aid,
Beside some surgeon of auguster name,
He stands that you may be the less afraid,
Borrowing from him a strength he would disclaim.
How does your frailty's all unvoiced demand
Find, at its need, the comfort of his hand.

How different he, moving from bed to bed
In that beloved temple of his heart—
The Children's Ward—whose inmates, once he said,
'Washed—bless them!—are your own bairns'
counterpart.'
Vowing of all his work if aught appear
Of any use that little aught was *here*.

Not his the fabled fees of Harley Street,
The glory of a Cavendish address;
Amongst his patients there are many meet
Only their liability to bless;
And though some drab surburban road may dim
His reputation, it ennobles him.

Oh Æsculapius, when at last great Jove
Lets loose his thunder and we know no more
Your wisdom and your pity and your love,
Still mindful, we will tell of one who wore
His heart for God and all the world to see
But hid his talent in humility.

Obiter Scripta

'ECHO'

ECHO

HE will not love me, e'en though I have laid
My very life beneath his thankless feet;
He will not love me,—nay, though I upbraid,
Masking my passion in a proud deceit.
And I am young and lovely; others tell
The charms uncounted that he will not own.
Oh, shame and shame! I will away and dwell
In hidden hills and nurse my grief alone.
There will I languish till at last I go
Beyond all vision. Yet, because I die
For love, unloved, the gods condemn and, lo,
Shall make my voice a deathless mockery.
But, maidens, though I mock 'tis but to warn
Who courts a lover's courts the immortals' scorn.

THE PASSIONATE POET TO HIS LOVE

(With apologies to great shades.)

COME, be my love and live with me,
The very world I'll charm for thee
Till all it holds, at thy sweet hire,
Serve but to compass thy desire.

Come live with me! To cloudy hills
I'll take thee and the new-born rills
Shall thrust their baby-fingers sweet
'Twixt crannied rocks to wash thy feet.

Come live with me! The wandered wind
In some far summer-house I'll find,
And rouse her from her sleepy lair
To comb the tresses of thy hair.

For thee I'll sweep the emerald lawn,
And in the dew-bath of the dawn
More white thy whiteness thou shalt make
Than winter storm-clouds' snowy flake.

Thy kirtle of the evening skies
I'll fashion that it's draperies
Of saffron be and amethyst,
Lined with the dusk and silver mist.

And gossamers that late have graced
The frosty hedge shall gird thy waist,
Bewoven in a cincture bright
Of opal sheen and moonstone light.

Slim cowslips in the summer breeze
A round shall dance my dear to please,
And music sweet for her sweet sake
The breeze-blown meadow grass shall make.

Yea, live with me and prove in sooth
Joy hath no date nor age nor youth,
For hurrying Time can lend no wings
To bear away eternal things.

'And 'gin I dally by the road,
And 'gin I foolish be,
I have no wish for the City of Heaven
Save in His company.

'Oh, merry may be yon cavalcade,
I would not say you nay,
And they that come to the City of God
They tread a merry way.

'But ways there are and ways there are,
Nor one nor two nor three;
Amen, good Lord, but pray Thee send
In all sweet charity.'

A COUNTRY MAID

WHY are you haunting the farm to-night?
Whenever the wind is still,
Lee of the wall where the road lies white
I hear you climb the hill.

Why are you haunting the farm, I say?
I hear the rusty gate
Shriek at its hinge and along your way
The stones of the gravel grate.

You thrust your face to the window's pane
And peer at me out of the gloom,
Out of the wind there, out of the rain,
Into the firelit room.

Yes, I am here! It is I you seek.
Did you think I would be afraid
To meet you now, that was once so weak,
And too simple to upbraid?

Oh, there 's shame and enough for me, I know,
But it's not in the sight of you
I'll need to be dropping my eyes so low.
God judge between us two!

Nay! How are you daring to watch me now,
Soul of the man you are?
Blacker than hell for a broken vow,
Thrice fallen—a fallen star.

A FRAGMENT

BUT maybe when I'm passed awhile
Far hence from your dear ways, you'll smile,
Remembering, yet want anew
The tributes that I bring to you;
Not for their value, but that love
Finds ever little things to prove,
Within a world of little things,
Its own immensity and brings
To cloak its glory, laughter, jest,
Light speech and trivial service, lest
Or loved or lover, seeing here
Its naked splendour, shrink for fear.

A BOWL OF HYACINTHS

BEAT, beat, rain-burdened Zephyr, at my pane!
Beat, beat! I fear thee not, oh thou accurst
Of memory! E'en as Apollo first
Provoked thee long ago and loosed the bane
Of jealousy, so I provoke again.
I fear thee not, although thine anger burst
My window-glass, for thou hast done thy worst
And here I kneel by Hyacinthus slain.
And yet, oh wind, how little would'st thou grudge
The lover's love I pay these changeling flowers,
Did'st know that very love thy sin forgives!
Forgives! Nay, rather it forgets to judge,
Finding in such sweet beauty loss that dowers,
Bereavement all-consoling, death that lives.

A KING'S DAUGHTER

HOW should we mourn a King's daughter,
Glorious without and within;
Or weep for the death the years brought her
That never had brought her a sin?

I found me fine linen to cover
The quiet white body of her,
But soft as I folded it over
I was hearing her white spirit stir.

And, sure, if it needs to go creeping
Away in its raiment of gold,
It has left me a princess that 's sleeping
Awhile, like the princess of old.

And it's like that I too in my watching
Shall sleep, yet nor she—no, nor I
Will lack us an ear to be catching
His step when the Prince shall draw nigh.

But if at his kiss you awaken
To him—him alone, my princess,
For his pity of true love forsaken
I'm thinking he'll love you the less.

THE ROAD-MENDER

Parate viam Domini rectas facite semitas ejus.

DAILY beside his heap of stones he stands,
An old, old man with meek, work-bended back
And hammer whose slow swing habitual hands
Wield with their ancient rhythm still nor lack
Their ancient skill; and still the cunning crack
Of countless flints is wrought, and still, hard by,
Spread on the hedge-row by the rutted track,
Bepatched to many hues, his coat doth lie—
A spot of colour flaunted to the sombre sky.

Day after day, with quiet, unquestioning zeal,
He makes his stretch of highway smooth and trim,
Lest some rough place trouble the unknown wheel
That, passing fustian scornful, splashes him.
Nor converse hath he save with birds that skim
His dinner, sacred in its scarlet dress,
Or later balance on the basin's rim
To share the remnants of his savoury mess;
Whose voices, unafraid, bepraise his kindliness.

And daily sees as evening draweth on
The shadows flee away across the hill;
And at their gentle heel comes Time anon
Chiming the changeless hour that doth fulfil
The closing cadence of his round; and still
He lingers, gathering ere he go his few
Belongings, homing last to sleep until
The morrow's sunrise bid him rouse anew
To tend his roughened road another long day through.

TO A PRIMROSE

OH, little flower, for whom life's enterprise
Is to watch Heaven with reflective eyes,
Pray Him you see there I, of my life's days
Make some such mirror to His love and praise.

TO A HOLLOW OAK

THEY have riven the side of you, great grey tree,
With the hurt that no time mends,
And they wounded you (oh, the treachery!)
Here in the house of your friends.

The sun and the wind and the sweet, rare snow,
The frost and the thaw and the rain—
Ah, and you loved them well, I trow;
Have they paid you back in pain?

Yet friends they seemed. Was the seeming nought
But the guise of a friendly part?
Even when most you loved, was the thought
Of the death of you in their heart?

And now you are dying, here on a hill,
And your lonely arms stretched wide
Are crying, it seems, to your slayers still
For the love that they denied.

Ah well—with a kiss the Judas came.
Be comforted, old grey tree!
The Lover of lovers they served the same—
You are in good company.

TO MY SISTER

WAS it the wind from the open lands
Came, like the lover it was, and crept
Over your sill 'twixt the curtains' bands
And kissed you and stole you whilst you slept?

Or was it the bird on the roof out there
That saw you and called you when no one knew
To travellers' freedom and travellers' fare
In the ways belovéd of him and you?

Was it the moon in the lonely night
Whispered you, 'Come, ere your heart grows old!
Come where distance has set delight
And your dreams are stars for your hands to hold!'

Or was it the flowers by your bed that heard
The sob of your spirit's sweet brave play,
And freed their fairies to dance and stirred
Too deeply your longing to dance away?

Oh, what does it matter! But this I know—
Not death's was the hand that touched you, dear,
And since you are laughing as you go
How shall we grieve you weeping here?

FIAT MIHI

LULLABY, little babe, pretty babe, see
How safely these two arms can shelter thee;
Warm in my hand now thy tiny feet lie,
And no one can hurt thee when mother is nigh.
Ah, would we might slip far away in the night—
Thou and I—far away, from man's hearing and sight!

Oh, pink crumpled fingers, so tender and frail,
Do you close even now on the print of the nail?
Oh, soft little side that I kiss and I kiss,
Little heart that will ever do nothing amiss,
With spear and with shame will they pierce you one day
On the hill at the end of the Sorrowful Way?

Little babe, pretty babe, what wonderest thou?
'Tis but little damp curls now that press on thy brow,
And thou dost not know, dear (or art thou so wise?)
Of the thorns and the blood that will blind thy blue eyes.
Oh, Jesus, my little one! Baby, my own,
My heart will be broken before thou art grown.

Yea, sleep, little Lord, lest thou hear me confess
How I would forego generations that bless,
Forego all the honour of ages to be,
To hold but a man-child so still on my knee.
Ah, I would I had dreamed those great things and might
wake
And know 'twas my pride, not an angel, that spake!

'BLACK MAGIC'

BLACK MAGIC

'I SAW my lady on that Cretan shore,
Where false Medea cast her spell and killed
Poor Talus; and because her heart was sore
For his betrayal, knelt she there to build
On that same spot where once his body lay
A fire of sea-wrack, whose grey thread of smoke
Rose whirling into giant disarray
And so disclosed a form to whom she spoke.

'Great son of Vulcan, lo, I conjure thee
Lest yon Elysian fields yield not the dead
What this sweet earth hath taught my poet and me—
The secret for whose sake thy hot veins bled.
Said she 'twere better far as gods to live,
Immortal, only gods being ever young?
And didst thou think their ichor hers to give
Who came to tempt thee with a lying tongue?

'Nay, Talus, but more wise my poet and I
Whose being Love and Beauty serve to feed
With very ichor of divine supply,
Making of mortals an immortal breed.
Dost hear of manna in the Elysian shades?
So gather he and I at morn, at noon,
And when the eve creeps down the dusky glades
To tryst her lover, night, beneath the moon.

'Lo, where it lies along these yellow sands
And all about the seagulls' trackless flight;
Dune-thistles, shaking, shed it in our hands;
It is the gleam on yon cliffs' sunlit height.

Poor ghost, thou seest not; I think thine eyes,
Grown dim with age, are cheated of the truth;
But of such vision did the gods devise
For man the ichor of their deathless youth.

'O Love! O Beauty! All-pervading soul
That earth and sky and ocean but invest,
Thou source of all, of all the ultimate goal,
Thou art eternity made manifest.
Yea, and in those rapt hours when man, I say,
Is one with Love and Beauty, then he feels
Himself a god and Time is but the way
Spurned by the passing of his chariot wheels.'

THE SHEPHERDING

IT chanced that to my dwelling on a time
Came sad-eyed Life, who raised the cunning latch
And called 'Ho, dreamer, leave thy foolish rhyme
Nor strive sweet slumber's failing notes to snatch
For idle songs the day shall never match.
He dips for pleasure in a well of pain
Who sings of shades that pass nor turn again.'

Whereat I bade him tarry whilst I took
My lyre and sang; and many a tale I told
Of things far off and sad and half-forsook
Of all save Fancy, that strange shepherd old
Who shepherds truths within a sleepy fold.
And Life crept closer like a weary child
And stretched his limbs and slept, and sleeping smiled.

LITTLE BROTHER THE WIND

ARE you there, little brother, beneath the eaves,
Hid in the shadows, black and still,
Whispering to the jasmine leaves,
That clamber and quiver around my sill?
I hear you, light though the lilt of your voice
As the dart and dip of the black bats' flight;
I hear you, kinsman of my choice,
Let us go home now through the night.

Dreaming I am of lonely places,
By upland ways and the quiet hills,
Of a leaning sky and cloud-rift spaces
Where wide and free the moonlight spills.
Come, little brother, for wisdom 's there;
We will go seek him, I and you,
And gather again things sweet and rare,
The truths forgotten that once we knew.

THE GAME

I HAVE a friendship with the dripping rain,
And all the length of many a moonless night
Do he and I and that old comrade, pain,
Meeting, make merry for my soul's delight.

O rain, Whose tears are you recalling?
O pain, how lovely are the flowers He trod!
And in such fellowship what sport enthralling
To play the night-long Hide and Seek with God!

VENIT NOX

quando nemo potest operari

HOW fair the auspice of the morning warm
Above the hill; and, ah, how fair the day,
Whilst I have laboured on the sunlit farm
The slow, sweet hours away!

In one small corner of the weald my plough
Has wrought, and I have toiled among the weeds
With happy, aching back and sweating brow
And sown my faithful seeds.

Yea, I have worked for love of earth and sky
And sun and wind and bird-songs and the scent
Of bursting buds, and for their company
Have passed the day content.

O lovely land! And now the westering sun
Urges the lengthened shadows towards my door
Nearer and nearer; and the day is done,
And I may work no more.

The last gold fades upon the furrows sleek,
Dim in the dusk the rows of springing green—
Strain, strain mine eyes, that nevermore will seek
And find the failing scene.

Look your long last before the day's dear work
Hide here forever in the gathering mist,
And laugh—lest I that love it shirk
The summons to desist.

But, oh, not firelight and the prosperous board
Be mine, to sit in idleness and wait!
If Night is coming, let me be abroad
And meet him at the gate!

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